

HABS  
CAL,  
48-FAIR,  
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Fairfield City Hall  
1000 Webster Street  
Fairfield  
Solano County  
California

HABS No. CA-421

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

HABS  
CAL,  
48-FAIR,  
1-

# CITY of FAIRFIELD ☐

Incorporated December 12, 1903

City Hall  
1000 Webster Street  
Fairfield, Calif. 94533  
(707) 425.1031

Office of Environmental Affairs

HABS No. CA-421

June 26, 1981

Name: Fairfield City Hall

Location: Fairfield Civic Center  
1000 Webster Street  
Fairfield, CA 94533

Northwest corner of Kentucky Street and  
Webster Street

Present Owner: City of Fairfield

Present Occupany: City of Fairfield

Present Use: City Administrative Offices

Significance: The Fairfield City Hall is one of six buildings in the 33 acre Fairfield Civic Center designed by Robert W. Hawley, Architect. The architect was selected through a design competition under rules established by the American Institute of Architects.

The six building Civic Center is dominated by the four-story rectangular City Hall located at the east end of a 3 acre figure-eight, man-made lake. Building materials include brick, concrete and copper.

The Civic Center, located adjacent to the downtown, is located on the former site of 315 units of temporary, war time housing known as Waterman Park. The units were used for housing civilian and military personnel stationed at the former Fairfield-Suisun Air force Station, and now Travis Air Force Base.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Date of erection

A contract was awarded for construction of the Civic Center and City Hall on May 14, 1969. Ground breaking ceremonies for the Civic Center took place on May 28, 1969 at which time construction of the complex began. Construction of the Civic Center Complex including the City Hall was completed on February 2, 1971. The buildings were occupied on November 12, 1970. A dedication ceremony was held on May 29, 1971. United States Senator John V. Tunney gave the dedication address. Donald F. Pinkerton, State of California, Director of Housing and Community Development, was the Master of Ceremonies. Mayor Loyal V. Hanson accepted the Fairfield Civic Center on behalf of the City, (See the enclosed Dedication Program.)

## 2. Architect:

Robert Wayne Hawley, Architect  
Ribera and Sue, Landscape Architects

Enclosed is a copy of an article which was published in the June, 1972 Architectural Record. Also enclosed is a copy of the building elevation plans which are signed by the Architect and a copy of the agreement between the City and Architect to prepare the plans.

## 3. Contractor:

Stolte, Inc. - General Contractor  
Solano Concrete - Site Work Contractor

## 4. Fairfield City Hall exterior remains unchanged from original construction. The Police Building which is adjacent to the City Hall is currently undergoing expansion.

The original plans for the City Hall are stored at the Architect's office: 1978 The Alameda, San Jose, California 95126.

Mylar copies of the original plans are on file in the Public Works Department of the City.

The June, 1972 Architectural Record article, which is enclosed, contains a discussion of the Fairfield City Hall and Civic Center. Also enclosed are photographs of the interior and exterior of the City Hall which were taken in Spring 1972.

5. The exterior of the Fairfield City Hall remains unchanged from original construction. Expansion of the Police Building which is adjacent to City hall and within the Civic Center was begun in the fall of 1980. Construction is expected to be complete by winter of 1981. The City Hall Architect, Robert Hawley, prepared the plans for the Police Building expansion.

#### B. Historical Context:

The first step toward a Fairfield Civic Center began on November 24, 1953, when the City Council voted to proceed with purchase from the Federal Government of a thirty-three acre site just north of the City's Central Business District. This site was well known as Waterman Park and had been a World War II temporary housing project of 315 units with a central recreation center and cafeteria. At the time of purchase the City Council intended that the site become Fairfield's Civic Center.

On January 1, 1954, the City Hall offices were moved into the recreation and cafeteria building. The City then took over operation of the housing units, renting them primarily to low-income families. Surplus rent from the operation of the housing project was set aside for future Civic Center construction.

To facilitate its role of housing assistance to low-income families the City Council appointed itself as a Housing Authority to administer a HUD Section 23 leased housing program. Many families were relocated from the Waterman Park housing to more adequate living quarters provided by this new Housing Authority.

An initial important decision made by the Council was to establish that the entire thirty-three acre site would be retained for Civic Center use. As these thirty-three acres were excessive for City facility requirements, it was decided that certain space could be made available for State, Federal and Regional service facilities as well.

In March of 1967 the City Council determined that an architectural competition be held to select an architect for the project. Mr. Louis DeMonte, AIA was hired as the City's professional advisor for the competition. A complete program for the competition was developed, specifying its rules and regulations, the area requirements of all projected facilities in the Civic Center and five members of a professional jury. Invitations were sent to registered architects residing in northern and central California and forty architects worked out design solutions and submitted entries to be judged by the jury. The first four place winners were announced on December 15, 1967. The winning selection was the entry of Robert W. Hawley, AIA, San Francisco.

The City Council next dealt with the problem of financing initial construction by appointing a Citizens' Advisory Committee to study the improvement needs of the community. The Committee, after thorough study of capital outlay needs and financing alternatives, recommended a package of improvements to be financed with General Obligation bonds which could be repaid without a tax increase. Civic Center bonds headed the list at 2.6 million dollars. Other issues on the same ballot of November 5, 1969 were for street improvements, neighborhood park development and a golf course. All issues except that for the golf course passed at a general election. The Civic Center bonds received a 79% "yes" vote.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Description of Exterior

The Fairfield City Hall is the largest building on the Fairfield Civic Center site. It is a four-story building containing 33,000 square feet of office space.

Dimensions are 186'-0" long, 63'-0" wide and 65'-0" high. The building is of reinforced masonry brick and concrete.

All City offices have dramatic views overlooking the central lake and thirty-three acres of Civic Center Park. The limited palette of materials - warm red brick and concrete are used throughout the entire Civic Center with the exception of a copper clad roof on the Assembly Hall and Council Chamber.

The Council Chamber is a separate building located adjacent to the City Hall and central plaza. The building was conceived as a symbolic place where public decisions are made. It was a desire of the City Council to establish a comfortable, direct relationship between the members of the City Council and the citizens of the community.

### B. Description of Interior:

Floor to ceiling windows overlook a central lake and thirty-three acres of Civic Center Park. All floors are fully carpeted. Moveable partitions and underfloor duct allow for future flexibility. The City, in 1970, allotted \$20,000 for art works to be used in the building. 35 prints were chosen, along with 40 commissioned photographs of the surrounding area by Ernest Braun. All furnishings, carpet, and draperies are color coordinated.

C. Site:

The central concept of the Fairfield Civic Center was the creation of a richly landscaped park within which are sited the major civic buildings of the City. The City Hall is situated on the west end of a 3 acre man-made lake whose jet fountains also serve as the cooling system for the entire complex. The long axis of the City Hall is oriented on a north-south axis. The major views from the City Hall run on an east-west axis. Deep concrete overhangs provide shading at all window surfaces.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: The Architectural drawings are stored at:

Original: Hawley, Stowers and Associates  
Architects & Planners, AIA  
1978 The Alameda  
San Jose, CA 95126

Mylar Copy: Department of Public Works  
City Hall, Civic Center  
Fairfield, CA 94533

The plans are dated: March 26, 1969

B. Early Views: See enclosed photographs and copies of newspaper and magazine articles.

C. Supplemental Information:

The City Hall building is the largest of the five building, \* \$3.9 million Civic Center complex. It contains 33,000 square feet. It is a four-story structure which overlooks a central, three-acre man-made lake. Office locations were planned so that those most often used by the public would be the most accessible.

All departments are served by a pneumatic tube station to facilitate handling of money and correspondence. A system of movable partitions is used in most areas which facilitates future remodeling or relocation of offices.

Carpeting is used throughout. In addition to the new furniture used, approximately 80% of existing furniture was refinished and moved into the new complex.

\*The complex actually consists of six buildings, but one of them is the mechanical building

The Police Administration building of 13,000 square feet is a one-story structure located adjacent to the City Hall. It is equipped with the most modern communication and internal monitoring systems available. There are no jail facilities. A booking area is included and four holding cells have the backup of a tight security system. The police building is presently being expanded to more than double its original square footage.

The Council Chamber is a separate building with direct access to the City Hall and Central Plaza. City Council meetings, which are open to the public, and Planning Commission meetings are held here. It has theatre-type seating for 108 people and a spacious lobby.

The Community Center fills a long-existing need for a public, enclosed space. This one-story building lies adjacent to the lake and was designed as a multi-use facility for recreational and cultural activities sponsored by the Fairfield Recreational Department. Areas have also been provided for senior citizens, tiny tots, and those interested in arts and crafts.

The assembly hall is the largest single enclosed space in the Civic Center. It is capped by a twenty-seven foot square skylight, the peak of which is located 44 feet above floor level. This space has been designed to serve a variety of functions including concerts, banquets, lectures, theatrical productions, fashion shows and dances. It has a seating capacity for 750 people.

Fairfield's City Council believed that public exposure to good works of art would have a stimulating effect on the community's fine arts as well as enhance the Civic Center's interiors. A permanent art collection, which is added to yearly, was initiated.

Forty-five prints and a wall hanging by well-known artists were carefully selected and purchased. Six additional paintings were commissioned to the Fairfield artist, Michael Green. Additional paintings are acquired each year as purchase prizes from a local art festival.

Ernest Braun was commissioned in the summer of 1970 to photograph the Fairfield area landscape in its seasonal changes. Thirty of these photos were selected and enlarged for permanent display.

Prepared by: Jay Bodutch  
Principal Planner  
Department of Environmental Affairs  
City Hall, Civic Center  
Fairfield  
June 16, 1981